



Information **UPDATE**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent/P.O. Box 7841/ Madison, WI 53707-7841

BULLETIN NO. 04.06

November 2004

TO: District Administrators, CESA Administrators, CCDEB Administrators,
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Assistant State Superintendent
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Complying with the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for
Students with Disabilities—Part 6: District Waiver to Exceed One Percent
Cap for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

This bulletin is the sixth in a series of bulletins describing the guidelines for complying with the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA). This bulletin explains the process for districts to follow when they exceed the one percent cap as outlined in the Title I regulations on Alternate Achievement Standards for students with disabilities.

In Wisconsin, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines whether the student will participate in statewide assessment through the WAA for students with disabilities. Using the WAA Participation Checklist, the IEP team is making the determination the student is meeting alternate achievement standards that differ in the complexity from grade-level achievement standards. Alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards must be aligned with the state's academic content standards, promote access to the general curriculum and reflect professional judgment of the highest achievement standards possible for the student.

The WAA is part of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) and is designed to assess the educational performance of students with disabilities who cannot meaningfully participate in the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) even with accommodations. The WAA for students with disabilities focuses on the knowledge and skills that are aligned with Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These knowledge and skills are considered to be prerequisite to the majority of content assessed by the WKCE. All students with disabilities who participate in the WAA for students with disabilities are counted for participation and contribute to the 95 percent participation requirement in No Child Left Behind.

The federal rule allows states that use an alternate assessment that is aligned with state academic content standards to include scores of students participating in WAA for students with disabilities who obtain a Prerequisite Skill (PS) Proficient or a PS Advanced in their AYP calculations. A district may use up to one percent of all Full Academic Year (FAY) students in the grades assessed for this calculation if they perform at PS Proficient or PS Advanced.

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For the 2003-04 AYP determination, all students who participated in the WAA and scored PS Proficient or PS Advanced were included in the proficiency rate for AYP purposes. Research suggests about one to two percent of the total population will need an alternate assessment. If a district had 200 FAY students in the tested grades, and if two of these students achieved a PS Proficient or a PS Advanced score on the WAA, they could be counted for AYP.

The regulation allows districts to apply for exceptions in order to slightly exceed the one percent cap. The waiver form for a district to fill out and submit to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) can be found at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/assmt-waa.html>. This waiver is submitted to DPI after the testing window has closed. The district will only submit a waiver when they have exceeded the one percent cap of students who participated in the WAA and were PS Proficient or PS Advanced.

Districts are asked to describe why the incidence of such students exceeds one percent of all students in the combined grades assessed, which may include programs or specialized services within the community for this population of students, or if there is such a small student population only a few students result in exceeding the one percent cap. The district must also give assurances that address procedural compliance with the implementation of the WAA.

Questions regarding this bulletin may be directed to the Special Education Team at (608) 266-1781.

This information update can also be accessed through the Internet at:
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/bulindex.html>

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